

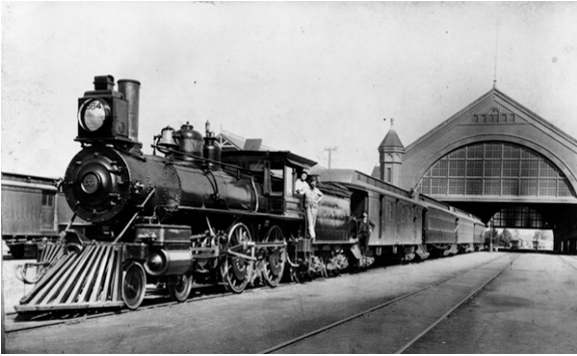


Ridge Route Communities
MUSEUM
& Historical Society

The Ridge Route Rambler

We're nuts  about history.

WHY ISN'T THERE A RAILROAD HERE?



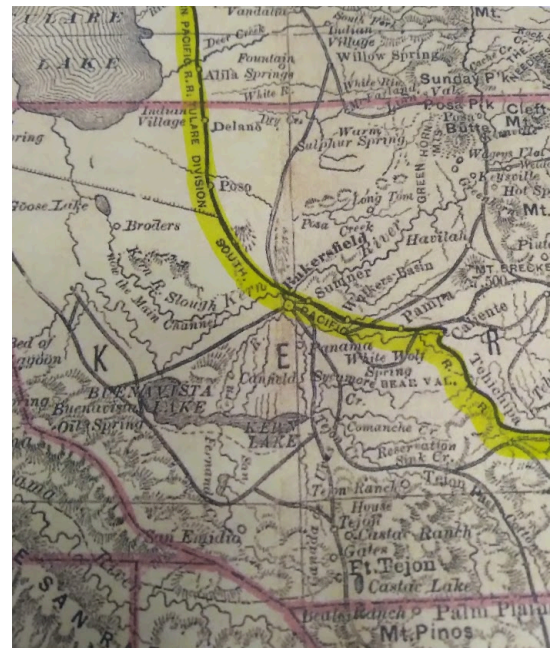
A Southern Pacific train at the Los Angeles Arcade Depot in 1891

In 1853 under President Franklin Pierce, Congress appropriated \$150,000 to survey the best route for a railroad from the Mississippi River to the Pacific Ocean under the direction of Secretary of War Jefferson Davis (yes, that Davis, who would later lead the Confederacy).

There were 5 surveys conducted; the last, along the Pacific Coast from San Diego to Seattle, was done by Lt. Robert Stockton Williamson of the Corps of Topographical Engineers (which later became Army Corps of Engineers).

Williamson's report of his party's explorations and surveys in 1853-54 covered our area. He began in Benicia, working his way down the San Joaquin Valley to what he called Hum-pah-ya-mup Pass, then "Tah-ee-chay-pah" Pass (presumably Tehachapi) to The Tejon (what we would consider the base of the Grapevine, at the southeast end of the S.J. Valley) to the Tejon Pass to the Canada de las Uvas (Grapevine Canyon) to the "Great Basin" (Antelope Valley?) to San Francisquito Pass. In each pass they took careful measurements of altitude and grade and made note of things such as water, timber, rock density and type.

His conclusions were that there were two "pre-eminently superior" passes, the Tah-ee-chay-pah and Canada de las Uvas. Distances in each were equal, water was equally abundant, and timber was more abundant in Tehachapi. But the main point of comparison was the grades. "In 'Tehachapi' we have 157 feet to the mile for 15 miles; in 'Grapevine' we have 302 ft. for five miles and two tunnels." He went on to say "that Grapevine, though perhaps not positively impracticable for locomotion, would present such serious difficulties that the Tehachapi Pass would be considered by railroad engineers as decidedly the preferable."



1879 map showing route of Southern Pacific Railroad

Interestingly Williamson noted "We found Mr. Ed. Beale, superintendent of Indian Affairs, at the Tejon, he having just arrived, after a long and arduous journey across the plains. A few days afterwards he selected this point for an Indian reservation." (The Sebastian or Tejon Reservation became operational in September 1853.)

In his discussion of Grapevine Canyon Williamson notes “there is a good wagon road through this pass; and I learn that, since our survey, a military post has been established at or near the springs.” This would be Fort Tejon, established in June of 1854.

The Southern Pacific Railroad began construction on the Tehachapi Pass section 21 years later in 1874 using over 3,000 Chinese laborers, headed by civil engineers William Hood and J.B. Harris; SPRR opened “the Loop” in 1876.

As an interesting aside, an article in the May 27, 1876 San Francisco Bulletin delineated how Beale acquired the Spanish land grants of Castaic, La Liebre, El Tejon and Las “Animas” (Alamos) “covering about 100,000 acres and sweeping in the entire Indian Reservation and other improvements.” “The line of Beale’s four ranches extends on one side for a distance of eighty miles. By arranging the lines as to take all the water in, and by taking up several springs and lakes beyond the exterior lines, Beale practically controls 200,000 acres more, simply because on public land extending out into the Kern Valley there is no water.” Beale also “owned the land included in the San Fernando Pass, the only route through the mountains.” “Beale...practically controls an area of land larger than the entire state of Massachusetts.”

One has to wonder if Beale’s control of water along the 80 miles spanning our area influenced Union Pacific’s decision NOT to use Grapevine Canyon for connecting their northern and southern routes.

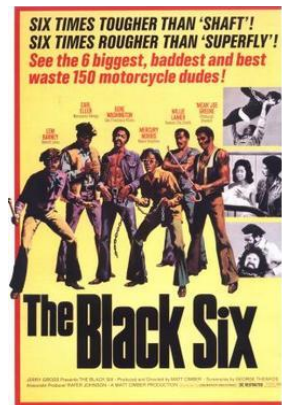
Discussing the railroads at the end of the 19th century, the Tehachapi News states “the Southern Pacific Railroad, which monopolized California’s railroads at this time, eventually found a rival in the Santa Fe Railway. Eyeing a line that would cross the Tehachapis from Bakersfield up to Tejon and Chanac Creeks, Santa Fe and Southern Pacific would come to an agreement in 1899 that let Santa Fe trains use the Tehachapi grade. The Santa Fe line no longer needed to be built.” So once again, our area lost out.

And it appears that planning for the High Speed Rail will once again pass us by with the route from Bakersfield to its next stop in Palmdale passing through the towns of Tehachapi and Rosamond, west of Mohave.

50 YEARS AGO...

We all know Frazier Park’s history with the Film and Television industry. The *Waltons* was filmed at the old Cuddy House in October 1973, but it was also the location of the 1974 film “*The Black Six*”¹, starring 6 NFL football players and 1 MLB baseball player:

- Gene Washington, San Francisco 49ers
- Joe “Mean Joe” Greene, Pittsburgh Steelers
- Eugene “Mercury” Morris, Miami Dolphins
- Lemuel “Lem” Barney, Detroit Lions
- Willie Lanier, Kansas City Chiefs
- Carl Eller, Minnesota Vikings
- Maury Wills, LA Dodgers

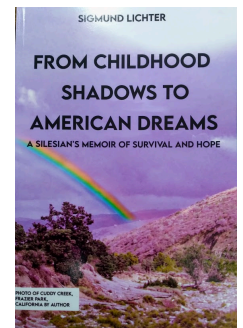


The movie follows the six as Vietnam veteran bikers, “roaring through the West for fun”.

The film is available on YouTube, if you are so inclined to check it out.

NEW IN THE BOOKSTORE

We now have Sigmund Lichter’s just released book “From Childhood Shadows to American Dreams”, his life story, for sale in our bookstore. See our Summer 2023 issue for his significant impact on our area.



¹ Some references list the title as “The Black 6” with a 1973 date.

CUDDY IN THE RYE

Lt. George Wheeler on his survey west of the 100th Meridian between 1871-79 encountered our founding pioneer John Fletcher Cuddy where he was homesteading at the east end of Lockwood Valley. According to Wheeler "that of Mr. Cuddy, from his testimony, is utterly unfit to raise any of the cereals except rye, which he says does fairly". He said Cuddy raised no garden vegetables, relying chiefly on stock raising. "He has fine bands of cattle and horses roaming at will over the hills within a dozen miles of his house."

Below is a photo from University of California's Calisphere of Charles (Cleve) Cuddy, John Fletcher Cuddy's great grandson, in 1973 (100 years later), harvesting.....rye.



In a conversation with Don Cuddy, Cleve's son, who still lives in Cuddy Valley, he said that he and his dad cultivated their own land, leased or sharecropped about 500 acres all over Cuddy and Lockwood Valley while Cleve was still alive. They also grew oats, barley and wheat but these tended to rot when they got wet or froze and had to be put in in March. Whereas rye would lay dormant and sprout after being buried in snow and could be put in as late as September, He said that after harvesting rye, you could even graze stock on the stubble. Don quit farming grain after his dad died.

RRPO REPORT

Ridge Route Preservation Organization volunteers are shown on its first Pothole Project day, RRPO has 3 more Clean Up the Ridge Route/Pothole Project dates planned for the summer: July 13, July 20 and August 18. They are also concerned about 2 sinkholes near Leibre Camp & Liebre Summit. Of great concern is a landslide on the southern end that is significantly eroding the roadway. Check their website ridgeroute.org for further details.



MUSEUM LIBRARY



A little known and little used asset of the museum is our library. Books are not available to check out, but are for in-house research only. Its contents have not been cataloged for about 15 years. Recently Wayne Diehl of Pine Mountain Club has begun cataloging our library collection using Libib, a cloud based management tool to catalog and organize library collections. We have then compared the Libib entries to our old analog list and added many titles. He has also physically moved the shelves down for easier access to people under 6 feet tall 😊. One of our "discoveries" in our collection is the ORIGINAL 1853 Williamson survey report that was used in this issue's railroad story.

If you have a local item of interest to research that you can't find by "googling", consider coming in and spending a few hours going through our library resources.

EVENT & BOARD MEETING CALENDAR

In **June** our very popular speaker **Programs on the Patio** returned every **Saturday in June at 6:00.**

- On the **1st** members of the Ralphs and Cuddy families recollected growing up on the hill.
- On the **8th** Albert Knight, Archeologist, gave a great presentation on **Chumash & local rock art.**
- The **15th** speaker was canceled (due to the Post Fire) and rescheduled for Sat. **July 6.**
- On the **22nd** our historian Bonnie Kane spoke on our local (Sebastian) **Indian Reservation Schools.**
- And on the **29th** Archeologist Bruce Love spoke on **12,000 years in the Antelope Valley.**
- The rescheduled speaker on **July 6** was Jamie Crawford on vintage cars on the Ridge Route.

The **Rib Basket Weaving Class** has been rescheduled from this spring to Saturday **July 20 @ 10:00 a.m.;** call to sign up.

We are looking forward to your Yard Sale donations starting in August, and volunteers to help sorting and getting ready for our **Great American Yard Sale, Sat. August 30, Sun. September 1 & Mon. the 2nd.**

*****AND AS A HEADS UP, WE ARE ONLY PLANNING A ONE WEEKEND EVENT THIS YEAR*****

The Fall will offer 2- 3 **Ridge Route Road Tours,** tentatively scheduled for Saturday **Sept. 14** and Saturday **Oct. 5** so far. Call to sign up.

October 26, a Night at the Museum may make a ghost appearance.

In **November** we may hold a Corn Husk Wreath Class, but no date set yet, And **December** is still too far away to know anything yet.

All Classes and Tours are paid private events, costing **\$20 per person.**

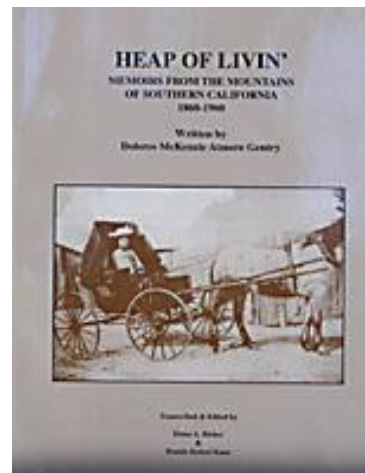
All Programs and other things (**Heap of Livin' & Yard Sale**) are **free and open to the public.**

Unless noted otherwise, all events are held on Saturday. **Board Meetings** are held on the **3rd Wednesday of the month, July 17, August 21, and September 18, 2pm** at the Museum and are **open to the public.**

HEAP OF LIVIN' DRAMATIC READING

On Saturday **July 27** at 7:00 p.m. we will once again present our Living History Theatre dramatic reading of **Heap of Livin'.** It tells some colorful stories from our mountains in the 1860s-1920s. **Admission is free,** but donations are always appreciated!

Based on the book of the same name by Dolores McKenzie Atmore Gentry, it is a true story of three generations of her family that starts on a wagon train from Texas to a homestead on Tejon Ranch in southern California. At age fifteen she unknowingly marries the leader of an outlaw gang of cowboys and is left to prove up his desert claim. For years her only friends are the Joshua trees and a cowboy on a neighboring ranch.



The book is available for sale for \$21 in the museum bookstore and on the website, but will be available for \$20 at the event.

YOUTUBE CHANNEL

9 videos, 61 subscribers, [@RidgeRouteMuseum](https://www.youtube.com/@RidgeRouteMuseum). We have new videos coming soon.

SIGNIFICANT DONORS

THANK YOU Wm. (Tony) Waters of Ventura for a significant donation to again enhance our December Lights display, and to help with repairs from the accident as well.

Thank you as well to recent new Lifetime members Susan and Dana Edwards of Lebec. And to Kenneth and Joanne Putnam for sponsoring Programs on the Patio.

REHOME THE BELL UPDATE

Although we have received a generous grant from the Alfred Harrell Foundation we anticipate needing funds well beyond that amount. So if you can donate any amount large or small, it will be greatly appreciated. You can either use the "Donations" line on the Mail-In Form in this newsletter and send a check, or we hope to have a Donate button up and running on the website soon.



We are also still looking for a contractor to take on the job, so we welcome any references you might send our way.

MOTEL GORMAN SIGN

Joey Dillon, local resident, Hollywood armorer, and historian, recently blessed us



with the top half, the "Motel" of the old Motel Gorman sign from the quaint little cottages from the 1940's that still sit behind the Chevron station in Gorman. The sign has been donated to the Santa Clarita Valley Historical Society, which has agreed to place it at our museum on a long term loan. That same day Leon Worden, came forward with the "Gorman" portion of the sign for us! Both are a little worse for wear; Gorman, having been face down in the dirt, suffered the worst.



PAINT & WOOD TREATMENT

We used the nice weather this spring to paint the barn on the property next door (that we use for storage and parking).

Using funds from a bequest, we also treated the 175 year wood of the Cuddy cabin.



NATIVE AREA FIXED AND MOVED

As you may remember in our last issue of the newsletter we wrote about someone who drove through our fence, and did some damage to our Native area. Well we've all but fixed everything and even moved the Ap to ensure its future safety.

HELP SUPPORT THE MUSEUM !!!

SPONSORSHIP & MEMBERSHIP TYPES

MEMBERSHIP can be personal or business.

Personal membership: Annual or Lifetime members receive discounts at our bookstore and gift shop, plus a quarterly copy of our newsletter.

Business membership: Are annual, and include a business card sized ad in our quarterly newsletter, plus a discount at our bookstore and gift shop.

Sponsorship: A one time donation; this donation will allow us to continue our outreach programs. Your name will be printed, posted and/or stated during such programs or events as a "Sponsor" of that program/event.

Corporate Sponsorship: Allows us to invest in the museum's future, its long term growth, acquisitions of new items, expansion and/or upkeep on our existing and future exhibits.



Sign up or donate online, visit: ridgeroutemuseum.org/membership

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